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[00:00:00] **JAMES:** …to try to get some of Model Cities' business. I worked with the group that was pulling the Model Cities contractors together to let them know about Executive Order 11246 and jobs. I think the first elected official of that was a guy named Allen, Johnny Allen. He was the first elected official of the Minority Contractors Association. And they had two objectives: one, to get minorities jobs, and secondly, to get minority contracts.

[00:00:36] **WILLIAM:** Okay, who did organize the Model Cities? Who pulled the group together, the Model Cities?

[00:00:41] **JAMES:** Walt Hundley at that time was the director, but there was a girl named Jean McGee. She was a Model Cities coordinator at that time, and she was the one who pulled together the meetings. Jean was probably working with or for someone else, but Jean was the instrument that made the thing happen.

It floundered, I guess, for about two or three months, and Tyree [Scott] just literally took over and said, "Hell, if nobody else is going to do it, I'll do it." At that time, Tyree had never been involved in anything like civil rights or demonstrations, you know, and he got caught up in it. We had several meetings with labor officials, we had tried to get them to develop a plan and everything else, but it never came off. There were at that time too, quite a few militants running up and down the street. There was a lot of anger and hostility, trying to find some place to be somebody, looking for a cause, something to do that's going to, "Hey, we need help, we're hurting" kind of thing. Tyree was able to pull some of these people together and say, "Hey this is one of the things we can do, we can channel this energy."

Demonstrations were one of the things that came out of this in order to get attention. Tyree did one other unique thing, too. After the first two or three demonstrations where there were some hairclippings, he started calling the police department and alerting them to the facts so that he could avoid this kind of conflict. So the police department on every occasion was notified when there was going to be a demonstration, where they would be, so there would not have to be kind of hostility that the police had demonstrated across the country, even here. So he did coordinate and cooperate with the police department.

I'm kind of floundering here, now. Is this the kind of background you needed?

[00:02:58] **WILLIAM:** Yeah, I needed some of that, but part of it, one bit of information I didn't have was the police department and that Tyree did that. The other point I didn't know was all the people in Model Cities. But one thing—what was it, the Department of Labor's involvement, including the Hometown Plan?

[00:03:20] **JAMES:** The Department of Labor's involvement was officially the Hometown Plan, period. This was our mission and our role. My job when I came out here was to try to get labor, management, and the minority communities to sit down and negotiate a Hometown Plan. We had talked to—officially, the Department of Labor talked to the Asian community representatives, we talked to some Indian community representatives, and tried to get a hold of some Chicanos. We did have—yeah, we had some Chicanos involved, also—to sit down and form a minority coalition to negotiate a Hometown Plan. We met with this coalition and explained to them what the purpose of the Hometown Plan was. We met with the AGC [Associated General Contractors] and we met with the unions to go over the purposes and the intent of the Hometown Plan and why we wanted it. There were some negotiating sessions.

The Department of Labor has the kind expertise that we could give to all three parties that would keep them from making the same kind of mistakes that had been made in other planned areas. For an example, one of the things that we had to look out for is the fact that the Hometown Plan worked to the detriment of the minority communities by its very nature. Because we say to the minority communities, the Chicanos, the Blacks, the Indians, the Asians that have never spoken to each other, never worked together, we say, "You folks get together and form a coalition to negotiate a plan for the construction industry with labor and management that had hundreds of years of negotiating experience." So the minority communities work at a disadvantage from the get go. And recognizing this, we went to the minority communities, and said, "Hey, these are some of the pitfalls that you have to look out for when you go to this negotiating table."

Labor management, on the other hand, they never had the experience of negotiating racial problems, it was a brand new ball game for them. Wages, salaries, conditions, and everything else had been negotiated, but they had never even dealt with racial problems. The result being, sitting down to negotiate, we have all kinds of

divergent points of views coming out. It was really difficult negotiations, because the minority communities were saying, "Hey, I ain't going to let no racist things happen in this agreement." Labor management said, "We're going to do things the same old way that we've been doing them, although they may have some racial overtones, it's just because you are too sensitive, minority communities."

Our official role was to try to get these three parties to come together and recognize all these divergencies and try to get them together and come up with a plan, with a staff of one person. With the negotiations going on, at that time, I was covering three regions, thirteen states: I had Denver, California, and Seattle and no staff, so I didn't know how effective we could be.

[00:06:36] **WILLIAM:** What had carried off for Tyree Scott's organization to develop? What happened to the Hometown Plan?

[00:06:48] **JAMES:** They came to one agreement, I've got some documentation of that. They came to one agreement in terms of what was the goal, the timetables, who was going to be the elected officials, or the operating officials. There was an understanding that the UCWA then would then be able to select the director or at least have something to do with the director. Something happened, I don't know exactly what did happen—

[00:07:15] **WILLIAM:** Was that before UCWA or after UCWA, after the demonstrations or before?

[00:07:21] **JAMES:** That was after the demonstrations. This was in April of '71, I believe it was. I can get the exact dates for you, though.

But there was an agreement in terms of who was going to staff the thing. Apparently, the selection of the staffperson was a Chicano named Robert [?Duvalier?], was not acceptable to the minority coalition. I have a report in there that kind of goes into why he wasn't acceptable. So the minority community pulled out of the so-called Hometown Plan—minority communities, Tyree and the rest of the groups, they pulled out their support. The only ones who stayed into it were the Indians. And the Indians, I believe, were really completely aware of what was happening. So the Hometown Plan was funded and operated without the support of minority communities, with the exception of the Indians, the Indians really supported it.

It continued to function for about a year as the so-called Hometown Plan. The regional position, the regional director here, under my position was that it should not be given approval as the Hometown Plan without the minorities in control over it. My recommendation also was that it be placed under [?part two of the bid provisions?].

Some other things were taking place here within the Department of Labor. OFCC [Office of Federal Contract Compliance] was merged into a bigger division in the Department of Labor Employment Standards Administration. There were now Employment Standards has the OFCC, Women's Bureau, Wage And Hour, Workmen's Compensation, all under it. And the social regional director literally took over the OFCC program.

[00:09:35] **WILLIAM:** The OSC?

[00:09:37] **JAMES:** The OFCC, Office of Federal Contract Compliance. He virtually took over the program and decided what was gonna be good and what was gonna be bad. He negotiated some goals for the new Hometown Plan, which lowered the goals from I think around eleven or thirteen percent down to five percent.

[00:09:56] **WILLIAM:** Who were you negotiating with?

[00:09:58] **JAMES:** With labor unions and management, labor unions and contractors. You see, the minority communities had pulled out of the Hometown Plan. The new negotiated goals was one of the reasons why UCWA had [?assumed?] the Department of Labor for coming out with these lower goals, extremely lower.

You know, the more that I think about this, now that I am talking about it, it would be good for me to document this whole history of this thing here, too. The kinds of things that was taking place both politically and in-house is quite baffling, in some respects.

[00:10:49] **WILLIAM:** It is baffling, look at the issue. What happens is you try to revolve—looking at the federal policies in terms of dealing with the minority communities at that particular time, that's externally fairly. Another way I can get at that is you have to look at the Hometown Plan, which preceded [Arthur] Fletcher. Fletcher came down with the Philadelphia Plan, and all this [was] going on when Tyree Scott was operating in this whole thing. National policy, as mostly in terms of dealing with local agencies. So I got to understand how the federal [government] behaved during this period of time.

[00:11:28] **JAMES:** Well, there's kinds of federal behavior here: One, the official policy in Washington was that there should be a Hometown Plan three party negotiated agreement. They redelegated the responsibility to carry out this policy to the regional level, which was the Employment Standards Administration, broad range of things. His concept of what was a good, viable Hometown Plan is quite different from mine, because I'm a little more sensitive to the needs of Black people than he is. His concept of fairness is quite different from mine, but he is able to put it down on paper, "This is fair." He is an authority, therefore they accepted the fact in Washington [D.C.], despite the fact that they knew that this was not fair from what I would say. "Jim doesn't know what the hell he's talking about, he's one of those radicals, he's one with Tyree and [inaudible]." So there wasn't a federal policy that said one thing, but there was a federal practice that did another. There were some hearings also.

[00:12:43] **WILLIAM:** Which place? In D.C.?

[00:12:45] **JAMES:** No, here in Seattle, by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights—this is gonna hurt you though, man, it ain't gonna help you—on the federal civil rights enforcement effort.

[00:12:58] **WILLIAM:** U.S. Civil Rights Commission?

[00:12:59] **JAMES:** Right, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. And I was kind of instrumental in getting them to hold those hearings on the federal civil rights enforcement effort.

[00:13:09] **WILLIAM:** What year?

[00:13:11] **JAMES:** This would have been in '72, I would guess. I was instrumental in helping them decide to hold these hearings. I even talked Joe Brooks into hiring a Black court reporter, trying to help a brother get on up in this world, he's gonna be a court reporter. The brother lost the records. So as a result, four days of hearings were never published because the records aren't available. At those hearings, the kinds of things that would be very helpful came out, like what the various federal agencies did, who did what to whom, what they were not doing, what were some of the problems of the whole enforcement effort.

[00:13:59] **WILLIAM:** So are there other ways I can document that?

[00:14:02] **JAMES:** You can document the fact that there were hearings, you can get the dates and times of the hearings from Joe Brooks, he may have some notes. Joe Brooks of California, U.S. Commission on Civil

Rights. He may have some notes as to who testified. But the brother who was a court reporter, that hurt in more ways than one, because that really would have been the kind of report to go back to Washington [D.C.] to the GAO [Government Accountability Office], and they'd be able to see what was really happening out here.

At the same time too, there was the court action, which was separate from the Department of Labor's action, and I can't speak authoritatively for what was going on in the courts. I would suggest—I'll tell you who might be able to give you that over there. There's a brother over there from EEOC [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission].

[00:14:53] **WILLIAM:** Oh I know who you're talking about, are you talking about Boulding?

[00:14:53] **JAMES:** Cal Boulding, right.

[00:14:56] **WILLIAM:** I talked to him already.

[00:14:56] **JAMES:** Okay. He can give you what's going on in the courts. What else now, where are we?

[00:15:09] **WILLIAM:** We're still in terms of the Hometown Plan, we're not to the Philadelphia plan yet, we're not to Fletcher.

[00:15:19] **JAMES:** I probably should've gotten out my history book here, because Fletcher was there originally with the original Hometown Plan.

[00:15:24] **WILLIAM:** Oh, he was?

[00:15:24] **JAMES:** Yeah, he was the guy that instigated the Hometown Plan concept. In fact, when he first came on board, he was the guy that said Hometown Plans must have goals and timetables for the utilization of minorities. The General Accounting Office and the AGC said, "Hey, no, that's unconstitutional, it's discrimination in reverse," and Fletcher was successful enough politically to get John Mitchell, the U.S. attorney, to back him on this. In the courts they won and legally established the concept of goals and timetables, and therefore he was able to come up with Hometown Plans. And the way that we were trying to develop Hometown Plans at that time was to say, "You're either going to develop a Hometown Plan or we're going to impose a plan." Nobody wanted an imposed plan. So that's the way that we were able to get labor management to sit down to negotiate.

The Philadelphia Plan originally was the Cleveland Plan, and that is where the Home Town Plan came from, out of Philadelphia. It was after Fletcher left that we began to have the kinds of problems that we're having with the Hometown Plans.

[00:16:40] **WILLIAM:** Oh, not while he was there?

[00:16:41] **JAMES:** Exactly, not while he was there. While he was there, they were flying. We developed, I think—well, in this region, I developed close to thirteen Hometown Plans—not in this region, but in the region that I was covering. And we came up with about thirty-nine across the country.

[00:17:02] **WILLIAM:** What effect did Tyree have, in terms of the Department of Labor? You know, in terms of the type of action he was taking, type of things he was advocating, type of demands he was making?

[00:17:16] **JAMES:** Regionally or nationally?

[00:17:18] **WILLIAM:** Both.

[00:17:19] **JAMES:** Within the region, he created an awareness, and he got a hell of a lot of support from the community, minority communities, he really pulled them together. As far as the Department of Labor is concerned, he scared the living hell out of them. Tyree went back to Washington [D.C.] once, drove a Volkswagen, took a bunch of guys back there to Washington [D.C.] and had a sit-in demonstration in the Secretary of Labor's office, and that scared the living hell out of them back there, they weren't ready for that. The troops back in Washington [D.C.], the Black people who were working in the Department of Labor, they got a big charge out of it. Here comes this dude from Seattle, sitting in the Secretary of Labor's office. But the official position of the Department of Labor is the traditional, "We're not going to be bullied into doing anything for anybody. Nobody is going to force us to negotiate, nobody is going to force us." They don't negotiate under pressure. This is the official position they took on it. They also took some strong measures to prevent this from reoccuring.

At the same time, we were having the same kinds of problems with the minority communities in Cleveland, where they went into my counterpart's office in Cleveland and tore the fucker up. Excuse me, sorry. But they literally turned over furniture and emptied files, the whole damned bit. They didn't bother Charlie though, because they knew where Charlie was, but they were so pissed at OFCC for their failure to act aggressively, they just tore the man's office up. There were all kinds of threats going on around the contract.

But Tyree's impact on the federal government was one, to create an awareness to move. And secondly, I understand too, one of the reasons that the other county government officials wanted to get involved is that they found out that every time that Tyree had a demonstration, there was a number of people they had to call out. They had to call out the police department, the auxiliary police, and it cost them pretty close to $20,000 every time they called out the auxiliary police. So if he has five demonstrations a week, that's $100,000. It's a hell of a lot cheaper to sit down and talk to this brother than it would be to call up the auxiliary police, as well as publicity-wise and all other kinds of reasons why. But there was a cost factor involved.

He accidently hit upon another thing that hasn't been used yet that I think would have a hell of an economic impact. When he went out to the airport to demonstrate, he was just walking around in the airport with all those hundreds of thousands of demonstrators, and you could block the passengers from getting on or off, and therefore stop the airlines by just standing in line at the ticket counters. People couldn't get on or off airplanes, you could literally stop air traffic, which has a hell of an economic impact on the country. This is one of the things that he hit on out there. The other thing in going out to the airport he hit on too was you don't have to worry about no tear gas in the airport, because the man ain't about to blow no gas in there, with all those traveling citizens and so forth. So it was safe to go to the airport, too.

But his impact on the government, I think that you can probably summarize it by saying that he sensitized the government and created an atmosphere where negotiations, sincere negotiations did take place.

[00:20:53] **WILLIAM:** Do you have some of the information on the Hometown Plan and the other plan?

[00:20:57] **JAMES:** Do I have it?